

**Dásas**, or **SLAVES**, a class of religious beggars numbering about 280, are found in most parts of the district. Like the *Gosávis* they are recruited from different castes, but are known by the name of *dás* or slave because they are devoted to the service of Venkatramana of Tirupati. Their home tongue is Kánarese; their family god is Venkatramana; and the names in common use among men are, Kanaka, Honnappa, Jetty, Bira, Shidda, Nága, and Parma; and among women, Honamma, Iramma, Jettu, Manjamna, Sántamma, and Bhimi. A servant of Venkatramana does not cease to belong to his own family. A man is either an hereditary servant of the god or he becomes a servant vowing to devote himself to the god if some sick member of his family recovers. A man who has made such a promise goes to Tirupati and is initiated, and makes a pilgrimage to the god every year unless he is prevented by sickness. When a servant of the god dies the yearly pilgrimage is kept up by his heir. Though the Dásas form one religious order the members who belong to different castes neither eat together nor intermarry. The only point of difference between the Dásas and the lay members of their castes is that the Dásas support themselves by begging. They eat the same food as the laymen of their caste except that they keep from flesh and liquor on Saturdays, new-moons, and fast-days. When they go to beg the men wear a long white coat reaching to the ankle, a headscarf, and a number of scarves and other articles of dress thrown across their shoulders and hanging from their arms and waistband. They also carry a conch shell in their hands. The skirt of the women's robe hangs like a petticoat; they have no bodice, and wear no ornaments of gold or silver. The men go about singing hymns called, *Dásara Padagalu*, or Slaves' Songs, in praise of Venkatramana with a bell and conch accompaniment. The people give them rice and money. The women do not beg but mind the house and work in the fields. They earn enough to keep them in fair comfort. During the rainy months (June-October) the men and women work in the field. During the dry weather, after attending the yearly fair at Tirupati in January, the men make a begging tour returning to their homes before the rains set in. They worship all Bráhmaṇ gods and keep all local holidays. The object of their special reverence is Venkatramana of Tirupati. Their spiritual Teacher is the head of the Vaishnav monastery at Tirupati called *Tátyáchári*. Their customs and caste organization are the same as those of the caste to which they belong.

**Gidbudkis** or **Gidbidis**, that is players on the small drum, also called *PINGGIS*, numbering about seventy, are found in different parts of the district, especially at Sirsi. The *gidbidi*, a small drum three or four inches in diameter, is played as an accompaniment to songs which they sing as they walk begging from door to door. They are natives of Sávantvádi, Ratnágiri, and Goa, and only occasionally visit Kánara. They belong to no one caste, being recruited from Maráthás, Dhangars, and other Maráthi-speaking people. On entering the order the novice has to learn by heart certain secret texts or *mantras*. Their family gods are Bhaváni and Ambábái whose shrines are in the Maráthá country. The names of men are, Govinda, Ilurgoji, Sidráṁ, Ilanmanta, Bassappa, and Yellappa; and of

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women, Lingi, Párvati, Basvi, and Devi. Their surnames are Náikal, Gháti, Bhise, and Kadam. Persons bearing the same surnames do not intermarry. They have three divisions, Gondhalis Bháts and Gidbidis. The Gondhalis do nothing but sing; the Bháts are fortune-tellers; and the Gidbidis sing Maráthi hymns to the accompaniment of a small drum. Some of the men and women are tall and some are middle-sized, and they vary in complexion from fair to wheat colour. Their home speech is Maráthi and they also talk Hindustáni. In their native country they live in one-storied houses with mud walls, thatched roofs, and front yards. Their furniture includes mats, low wooden stools, brass lamps, metal plates and pots, and earthen vessels. Their ordinary food is rice and fish, and they occasionally eat flesh and drink liquor. They are moderate eaters and drinkers, but not good cooks. Like the Dásas the men wear a long white coat reaching to the ankle, a headscarf, and a number of clothes thrown over their shoulders and hanging from their arms and waist-band; the women wear the robe falling like a petticoat and a bodice with a back and short sleeves. They are thrifty and sober but lazy. They are professional beggars and soothsayers, moving in bands of two or three, singing as they walk from door to door. Their songs are for the most part in praise of Krishna, Rádha, and other characters in the Mahábhárat. About the middle of May they return to their native villages where they are said to work as husbandmen during the rains. They are not well-to-do and rank with Dásas. A family of five spends 12s. (Rs. 6) a month. They worship all Bráhmaṇ gods and keep the local holidays, but their special deity is Vithoba of Pandharpur in Sholápur, whose shrine they occasionally visit. They employ Konkanasth or Karháda Bráhmaṇs to perform their marriage, puberty, and death ceremonies. They marry their girls between eight and eleven and their boys between fourteen and twenty. Widow marriage and polygamy are allowed and practised; the dead are buried sitting, generally at the foot of some hill or rising ground. Their other ceremonies do not differ from those of Ratnágiri and Sávantvádi Maráthás. They have headmen or *pátils* who settle social disputes with the help of the men of the caste. They do not send their boys to school or take to new pursuits.

*Gosávis.*

**Gosávis**, a class of travelling beggars, numbering about 200, are found in different parts of the district, especially in the larger towns. The order is said to have been founded by Shankaráchárya, the apostle of the Smárt sect of modern Bráhmaṇism about the eighth century after Christ. It contains ten divisions: Giri, Puri, Bhárti, Van, Aranya, Sarasvati, Tirth, Áshram, Ságar, and Parvat. It is a brotherhood of wandering beggars most of whom belong to Upper India. A novice begins by vowing in the presence of an elderly member of the order to keep the rules of conduct. The initiate becomes the novice's teacher or *guru*, and the novice becomes pupil or *chela*. The *chelas* are either voluntary converts or they are children who have been given by their parents in fulfilment of a vow. Their chief observances are to live in celibacy, to feed the hungry, to earn their living by begging, and to visit holy places. On entering the brotherhood the novice becomes free from caste rules. He removes the thread or silk girdle which is worn by all

Hindus and to which when worn the *langoti* or loincloth is fastened, and in its place he puts a piece of cloth. For a time a novice is free to withdraw, but after the time of grace is ended he takes a solemn oath which cannot be recalled. The Gosávis are staunch worshippers of Shiv and deadly rivals of the Bairágis or Vaishnav ascetics. Most Gosávis are tall, wheat-coloured, and regular featured. Their vernacular is Hindustáni. Some are settled in Kumta, Gokarn, and Sirsi, but most pass through the district on their way to or from Rámeshvar near Cape Comorin. They live in rest-sheds. They are strict vegetarians, living chiefly on rice, split pulse, wheat-flour, and clarified butter. They do not drink liquor, but are fond of smoking tobacco, drinking hemp or *bhang*, and eating opium. They rub their bodies with ashes and dishevel their hair. Their clothes are a loincloth and a long reddish-brown gown. They shave neither the head nor face and generally have their long matted hair rolled in a great coil at the back of their heads. They are very lazy, irritable, and given to hemp-smoking. They practise such austerities as sitting in the sun surrounded by fire, exposing themselves to pinching cold, standing for a long period on one leg, and holding one or both their hands over their heads. They live on charity, especially rations distributed in temples at Kumta, Gokarn, and Sirsi, where the traders lay by a certain part of their income to feed Gosávis. They rank next to Bráhmans. They go to beg in the mornings and evenings passing the rest of their time in cooking, smoking *gánja*, and sleeping. A single Gosávi spends about 3s. (Rs. 1½) a month. They worship all Bráhman gods, especially all manifestations of Shiv and Párvati, and the Rám incarnation of Vishnu, and keep all Hindu holidays. They do not marry but many have concubines. They adopt disciples who are called *chelds*. They are free to dine with all classes of Hindus, but none of the Kánara Hindus take food cooked by them. They bury the dead without mourning. They have no social organization, but they often travel and live in bands, one of them being head and keeping the rest in order. Some can read and write and some are well acquainted with the doctrines of their religion.

**Jogis**, who are also called Manigárs or Bogárs, number 859 of whom 437 are males and 422 females. They are found in the Sirsi sub-division living with other castes. They take their name from the Sanskrit *yog* meditation. They are said to have come about 100 years ago from Tuljápur in the Nizam's territory on account of the unsettled state of their country. The founder of their community is said to have been one Machchindar Báva who was born at Tuljápur and became a monk. Their home tongue is Maráthi. Their family goddess is Tuljápur-Bhaváni, whose shrine is at Tuljápur. The names in common use among the men are, Ránoji, Krishnoji, Báloji, Lacharám, Fakiráppa, Limbáji, Bhainoji, Bhagvantappa, Tuku, Hirnáth, and Ráya; and among the women, Shiddu, Krishni, Jivi, Sanki, Tuki, Dvárki, Sántu, Tulja, Iri, and Sukri. Their surnames are Todkár, Sutár, Pátíl, Bhandári, Kotvál, Sonár, Gongdeker, and Desuk. They are said still to eat and intermarry with their relations in Sholápur. Persons bearing the same surnames do not intermarry. They are divided into twelve sections which do not

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intermarry or eat together. The names are, Murád, Ker-jogi, Jogái-jogi, Kindri-jogi, Dávarji-jogi, Balgár-jogi, Mendar-jogi, Are-jogi, Maráthi-jogi, Kurub-jogi, Berak-jogi, Bhorpi-jogi, and Dombár-jogi. They are dark, short, and spare, with well-cut features. Their home tongue is Maráthi, largely mixed with Kánarese and spoken with a drawl. Their houses are generally one-storied with mud or stone walls and with thatched or tiled roofs; and their furniture consists of mats, copper pots, and wooden boxes. Their staple diet is rice, millet, and split pulse, and they eat animal food, but do not use any intoxicating drink or drug. Their holiday dishes are cooked meat and millet bread and *holige*. They are moderate eaters but not good cooks. The men wear the waist-cloth, the shouldercloth, and the headscarf with gold, finger and ear rings, and a silver girdle. The women wear the robe one end hanging like a petticoat, the other end drawn over the head like a veil. The bodice has a back and short sleeves. They wear gold and silver ear, neck, waist, finger, and toe ornaments. They are fond of wearing flowers chiefly *shevantis* or chrysanthemums, *sampiges* or champa flowers, and *malliges* or jessamines. They are hard-working and frugal, sober and orderly. They are peddlers dealing in glass and lacquered beads, knives, needles, corals, bells, and other articles. They bring metal vessels and scents from Poona and glass beads and other articles of European manufacture from Bombay. They move from place to place and attend local fairs or *jatrás* laying out their wares in booths made of coarse red cloth stretched across a cord tied to two bamboo posts. The women sell as well as the men. The little children beg and after twelve boys begin to help their fathers. Some of them work as husbandmen. Competition is said of late years to have greatly reduced their profits as peddlers. Though a falling class some of them own small landed properties and most of them are free from debt and able to borrow as much as £100 (Rs. 1000) on personal security at twelve per cent. Of the twelve divisions the Balgár-jogis and the Jogái-jogis rank highest. These two classes consider themselves equal in social position and eat with each other, though they do not intermarry. The rest claim equality with one another but neither eat together nor intermarry. In the early morning both men and women arrange their wares in front of their shops or booths. Then the women go to prepare food and the men attend to customers. When breakfast is ready between ten and eleven the women take the men's place in the shops while the men take their midday meal. Then the men go back to their place in the booth and the women have their meal and after it string and sort the beads which have come loose from Bombay. The ordinary monthly expenses of a family of three adults and two children are 14s. (Rs. 7). Their houses cost to build from £5 to £50 (Rs. 50 - Rs. 500) and their furniture £1 to £10 (Rs. 10 - Rs. 100). They spend from £10 to £20 (Rs. 100 - Rs. 200) on their weddings. Jogis are a religious people, their chief objects of worship being Tulja-Bhaváni and Khandoba, whose images they keep in their houses and worship every day before they take their meals. They also venerate all local gods and observe their days, making pilgrimages to Gokarn, Tuljápúr, and Jejur in Poona where is the shrine of Khandoba. They respect

Havig Bráhmans, and their chief holidays are *Shivráttra*, *Nág-panchami Dasra*, and *Diváli*. Their spiritual Teacher is a Marátha named Maachchindar. He lives in the Sholápur district and on his death is succeeded by a member of the Bhanoa monastery near Sávantvádi in the Konkan. They are said to have no faith in sooth-saying and witchcraft and do not offer blood sacrifices. Girls are married either before or after they come of age and boys at any time after eight. Widow marriage and polygamy are allowed, and the dead who are either burnt or buried are mourned for ten days. On the tenth day after a birth or a death the family priest purifies the family by giving them the five products of the cow. Ceremonies are performed in honour of the dead at the end of a month and at the end of a year after death, and all the departed are remembered on *Mahálpaksha* or All Souls' Day (September-October). Caste disputes are settled at meetings of adult castemen under the presidency of their hereditary headmen or *budvants* who have the power of fining offenders, turning them out of caste, and receiving them back. They teach their boys to read and write Kánarese and Maráthi, but do not take to new pursuits.

**Ka'npha'te Jogis**; numbering twenty-six, are found in Kárwár. They claim to be immigrants from Northern India. The names in common use among men are, Sukdu, Bábu, Kusht, Vomno, Hari, Bhikaro, and Tolio; and among women, Mhálkumi, Jánki, Devki, Gunái, Yashoda, and Rukmin. Their home tongue is Konkani and their family god Kálbhairav whose shrine is in Goa, where their caste, with whom they eat but do not intermarry, is found in large numbers. They are tall, spare, and wheat-coloured, with well-cut features. They live in one-storied houses with mud walls and thatched roofs with narrow verandas and front yards in the middle of which stands a sweet basil plant. They are not good cooks but moderate eaters. Their staple food is rice and *rági*. They are also fond of fish, and when they can afford it eat flesh except beef or village pig. They drink liquor. The men wear a loincloth, a narrow ochre waistcloth, an ochre head-scarf, and a blanket. The men's only ornaments are a pair of metal earrings. The women pass the skirt of the robe back between the feet and draw the upper end over the shoulder and bosom. They do not wear the bodice. Besides the marriage nosering lucky necklace and glass wristlets, the women wear earrings. They are hard-working, sober, thrifty, honest, and well-behaved. Their hereditary calling is begging and singing hymns. They now also work as husbandmen, gardeners, and unskilled labourers. Besides doing household work the women help the men in the field. Some of them are priests in the temples of Kálbhairav, and on All Soul's Day or *Mahálpaksha* (Sept.-Oct.) are asked to pray at the houses of Konkánas who feast them and pay them a half-penny or a farthing ( $\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{1}{4}$  *anna*). At harvest time they sing hymns at the doors of Hindú husbandmen and get one to four pounds of unhusked rice and  $\frac{1}{2}$  *d.* ( $\frac{1}{2}$  *anna*) in cash. As labourers the men earn 6*d.* (4 *ans.*) a day, and the women who reap, weed, and thrash; get six pounds of unhusked rice and a meal. They do not make more than a bare living and are forced to borrow on marriage and other occasions. As husbandmen and field

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workers their daily life does not differ from the life of other husbandmen and field workers, except that on Saturdays and during the harvest season they go begging. Those who do nothing but beg, start at daybreak and come home about noon; go out again in the afternoon, and return about sunset. A family of five spends about 16s. (Rs. 8) a month. Their furniture is worth 4s. to 10s. (Rs. 2-Rs. 5), and their marriage expenses vary from £5 to £10 (Rs. 50-Rs. 100). They worship all local gods and keep all holidays, especially *bhānd* or hook-swinging festivals and *jatrās* or fairs. They employ Joishi Brāhmans to perform their ceremonies and have as religious Teacher the head of the Kadre monastery near Mangalor in South Kānara. Each house pays the Teacher a yearly contribution of 6d. to 2s. (4 ans.-Re. 1), which is either collected by an agent of the Teacher or sent with a deputation of the caste once in four or five years. Their family god is Kālbhairav whose shrine in Goa is visited by them at least once in their life. They have also local shrines of Kshetrapāl at Sadāshivgad, Bharmanāth at Asnoti, and of Shioda at Bhair in Kārwar, where they repeatedly go on pilgrimage. They have also household gods called *puris*, deceased ancestors represented by unhusked cocoanuts, which are worshipped and changed every year on New Year's Day or *Yugādi* in March-April. The old cocoanuts are made into oil with which the lamp—that burns before the cocoanut-god is fed. This god is kept only in the house of the head of each family group. On the first day of the year all the members of the family, each bringing a pound of raw rice, a cocoanut, and a half pound of molasses and some money, go to the house of the head of the family. There the victuals are cooked with a variety of dishes, the chief of which is *pāisa*, the cost of these dishes being met from money contributions. They keep an iron trident, a symbol of Kālbhairav, and to this, as well as to the village gods they offer fowls and sheep during the *Dasra* holidays in October and feed on the flesh of the victims. They are firm believers in soothsaying, in witchcraft, and in the power of evil spirits. As a rule girls are married before they come of age. Widow marriage and polygamy are allowed and practised, and polyandry is unknown. They mourn the dead ten days and are purified by drinking water touched by their Joishi. When boys are about three years old an elderly man called *guru* or Teacher puts metal rings called *mudrás* in their ears and teaches them prayers or *mantrās*. When this is over the guests are treated to a feast. Their other ceremonies do not differ from those of the cultivating classes. They have an hereditary headman called *budvant* who lives at Halja in Kārwar. He settles their social disputes with the help of the men of the caste. His decisions are final and are enforced on pain of loss of caste. They do not send their children to school or take to new pursuits.

## Gondhalis.

**Gondhalis**, numbering 89 of whom 61 were males and 28 females, are widely spread over the district. They are professional beggars and do not differ in any point from Vengurla and Sāvāntvādi Gondhalis. They are of Marātha extraction and came to Kānara from Sāvāntvādi.

## Thākars.

**Thākars**, numbering 16 of whom 9 were males and 7 females, are